

Chair Grijalva, members of the Board, with permission I would like to provide an overview with what we understand at this time.

Good Morning, First, our hearts are heavy for the loss of life related to the accident, our condolences to the families.

On February 14<sup>th</sup> at 3:04 PM, the Pima County Office of Emergency Management was notified that 1<sup>st</sup> responders had arrived at the scene of an accident involving hazardous material on Interstate-10 between Kolb and Rita Roads. The spill was later confirmed to be Nitric Acid of unknown quantity. Multiple law and fire agencies were enroute under mutual aid request.

Later OEM was informed that Unified Command had been established with Arizona Department of Public Safety, Tucson Fire, Tucson Police, Pima County Sheriff, and the Arizona Department of Transportation and that DPS was Incident Command, and Tucson Fire was handling the hazardous materials response as the scene was located within city limits. Later they would be joined by DPS HazMat specialists.

It should be noted that 1<sup>st</sup> Response Agencies and emergency managers are trained to the National Incident Management System and the Incident Command System. This foundation for a common system across the nation was established after 9-11 by then President Bush under Presidential Directive.

It establishes that when an incident occur, like in this case, the jurisdictional law enforcement and fire department are responsible for managing the incident. As they require more resources they activate mutual aid agreements. The role of Emergency Management is to serve the needs of the Incident Commander with resources beyond their control.

Hazardous Materials incidents are some of the most complex to manage. They occur infrequently and require specialized training, a specialized team of Hazardous Materials Technicians to handle. They require early recognition and rapid decision making if it is determined that the public can be at risk of exposure. At the same time they are methodical as the type of hazardous materials dictate the personnel protective equipment required to contain and control, and the additional resources required to clean up the spill to ensure safety of all.

What OEM has learned at this time:

- DPS arrived on scene at 2:44 PM and closed I-10 at 2:56 PM.
- The wind moved the plume cloud to the north/northeast.
- Due to plume movement, there was a decision by Command to evacuate a school, a large industrial complex, and trailer park. One resident in close proximity to the accident was also evaluated.
- More resources arrived to assist with evacuation, and traffic control to close off the Interstate and route traffic to surface streets.
- There was an additional fire at the scene that was extinguished.
- Weather was a factor during the incident, this included wind, rain and snow. The National Weather Service provided updates.
- For those that drove through the plume in the early minutes of the accident exposure was very minimal. Arizona Poison Control has stated that someone would need to be within feet of the accident of a prolonged period of time to be exposed. They also stated any chemical unlikely traveled that far.

- Operations continued throughout the night. Agencies were requested to move loads of dirt to cover the spill.
- The investigation is on-going.

The Office of Emergency Management is NOT a first response agency and were advised by Tucson Fire at 3:04 PM with no requests for support.

At 3:25 PM OEM was requested to coordinate with Tucson Fire on a mass notification message to the public through our MyAlerts platform. The 1<sup>st</sup> message was delivered at 3:53 PM. FOUR more messages would be delivered during the operation to the populated area regarding shelter-in-place. This included rescinding the shelter-in-place at 8:03 PM and reinstating at 4:05 AM the next morning when the plume started again. The last message delivered was at 5:06 PM on February 15<sup>th</sup>.

County Administration was contacted immediately and updated throughout the operation.

OEM was not the only county department involved.

- Many departments received calls from concerned citizens.
- Media and other organizations were directed to contact DPS public information officer or PIO per their request as lead agency.
- Communications and OEM were in a DPS PIO managed communications group.
- OEM was in contact with PC Department of Environmental Quality.
- The Health Department was instrumental in working with the Arizona Poison Control Center and developing public messaging with support of Communications to educate the public to the hazards of the agent and measure to take.
- Communications opened a public facing webpage.

The scene remained active for approximately 27 hours and was terminated at approximately 6:00 PM on February 15<sup>th</sup> and I-10 was opened for normal traffic.

Notification of spill was submitted to the National Response Center. It was reported 3,575 gallons was spilled.

The last involvement from our Office was on Friday when my Community Outreach Coordinated conducted an media interview focused on MyAlerts.

While there are still remnants of the accident, the spill is contained with no reported environmental impact and remaining materials are to be removed.

I commend the efforts of the 1<sup>st</sup> Responders and support agencies involved in the operations. There were no lives lost or injuries directly related to the hazardous materials spill or the plume. While the scene was successfully controlled and mitigated, there will be lessons learned that will strengthen our community in preparedness, in communications, and in response.

As Ms. Leshar stated earlier, it is too early to discuss all the factors involved in this incident. Internally, departments are starting their hotwashes just as OEM has conducted an internal review. I have communicated with DPS and TFD asking their intentions for an after action process. At a time later more information will be presented which will include strengths, challenges, and recommended improvement areas.

Pending questions. Thank you that ends my summary.